

VSA Council Minutes

November 11, 2007

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

2. Attendance

Guests: Kaisa Cabot, Peter Chesney, Mary Catherine Halfpenny, Sally Huang, Hannah Kullberg, Alison Lotto, Amory Meltzer, Yasmin Roberti, Jamie Rosen (President's Assistant), Sam Rosen-Amy (Miscellany News), Laura Saiz, Hannah Segrave, Alex Sheff, Lauren Sutherland (Miscellany News), Hayley Tsukayama (Miscellany News).

3. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes from November 4

b. Allocation of \$130 from Speaker's Fund to College Democrats

c. Allocation of \$80 from Collaboration to Forum for Political Thought

No objections were made, and the consent agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Reports

a. Committee on Curricular Policies

Three representatives from CCP reported to Council that they have met a few times so far this year, although they have faced some problems with scheduling. Student participation has been good in the group, and they have discussed such issues as 2-2 and V-Print. They are concerned that there is not much of a channel for student input about 2-2, in part because the final decision will be made by the trustees. The administration is asking different departments for possible outcomes if the change to 2-2 is made, to understand how the decision will affect class offerings and academic opportunities for students. The faculty is optimistic about the switch, but CCP is concerned about decreased opportunities for students, especially in certain interdisciplinary departments and classes.

b. Library Committee

The elected representative to the Library Committee reported to Council that the committee has met three times, but that scheduling has been hard. There are three specific issues being addressed in the library this year. The first is long-term and short-term planning, so the committee is considering some short-term changes that would improve the library, as well as such long-term issues as possible renovations and extensions of the library. Another issues being discussed by the committee is carrels and lockers, which is of special importance to seniors. The final issue being discussed is the creation of a 24-hour study space in the library, which is being discussed as possibly inside the library, or possibly in another space on campus.

c. Admission and Financial Aid

The main topic being discussed by CAFA is racial diversity, and how best to increase racial diversity in both the college's applicant pool and within the college itself. They are examining the make-up of the Class of 2011 and the class before to view current statistics and trends. They are discussing possible recruitment methods, and determining what data is necessary to improve these methods. There will be increasing recruitment from local areas, and then moving to recruit from areas further away from the college itself. The committee is attempting to talk to students of color already on campus to determine what made them choose Vassar, in order to help diversify the student body.

The committee also expressed a desire to put more of a focus on socioeconomic diversity in the discussion of admission and financial aid.

d. Science Facility Planning

The representative from the SFPC reported that they meet on a regular basis, once a week, and that there are six or seven students that meet in the committee each week. The architects have met with all of the departmental interns, and the college is very close to approaching the stage of letting architects create their individual proposals and bring them to the college. There is uncertainty about the placement of the new building, but some of the prominent options include replacing either Mudd or Sanders Classroom. The representative reported that the new building is intended to foster interdepartmental courses and programs, as well as fostering new research opportunities. He also assured that the issue of sustainability is being considered in the new building's design, and gave a timeline of 5-10 years for the creation of the new facility.

e. Investor Responsibility

Nobody was present at the meeting from the Campus Investor Responsibility Committee to give a report.

f. Exec Report (Operations)

Operations reported to Council that VSA Today, which is updated on a bi-weekly basis, is finally available. There is a new section of the VSA Website for VSA Today, and Exec is trying to sponsor a community section of it. Operations also announced that she has added and changed everything on the VSA Website to be completely current and accurate. She has been meeting with a few administrators to ensure that all committees' voices are heard. CASA has been meeting weekly. The Devils event for freshmen happened this past weekend. This week will have a networking event, which is open to everyone interested in improving their networking skills.

Operations has also been involved with the VSA survey, which she encourages everyone to fill out. Appointments has been meeting, and CRC will be meeting this Saturday about the make-up of the Board of Elections. They are considering restructuring the Board to make it more appealing, possibly creating certain positions for which people will apply, and possibly changing the default Board chair to become co-chairs, which would include one chair and one senior member of Council.

g. Council Report (Joss)

Joss reported that although the dorm began the year in a financial crunch, they have fundraised and significantly decreased their deficit. They have sold old dorm t-shirts, and sponsored an anonymous CD swap among residents. They are participating in the dorm scarves, and already have 130 pre-orders. They sponsored an 80s dance for the freshmen in August, as well as a bagel brunch in September. Other events have included a sophomore snack event, a freshmen cookie decoration event, apple picking with Davison, a Farmer's feast with the Walker Family Band, the annual Halloween decorating contest, and their first Fireside Chat last Thursday. Their upcoming event will be Harvest Ball with Davison, and tickets will be sold this week in the College Center. Joss also mentioned that they have had some problems with underage drinking, especially in freshmen, during weekdays, and that the dorm will be working to improve on that in the future.

h. Council Report (Raymond)

Raymond reported that they have been sponsoring their usual Study Breaks and Community Cookies each week. He also expressed happiness toward the performance of their new House Advisor. The dorm sponsored a Carnival and Haunted Hoedown a month ago, which he described as expensive, and was unsuccessful because of the rain.

The dorm participated in apple picking with several other dorms in September. The dorm has also sponsored a lot of alternate programming, including movie nights and an upcoming game night. They have a Fireside Chat coming up soon, and are looking to “adopt a family.” They are participating in the campus-wide dorm scarves, and will be getting dorm shirts soon.

i. Council Report (2008)

2008 reported that things are going well, and that they were named organization of the month last week. They have sponsored both Serenading and the Halloween Party. The class is looking into doing a thesis study break, possibly in the Shakespeare Garden, depending on the weather. They hope in the future to sponsor a much more aggressive food drive than their first, which was very unsuccessful. They have selected their Daisy Chain coordinators, will be hosting a Senior Mug Night or a Karaoke night soon, and reported that the issue of yearbook pictures will be addressed soon.

4.5. Announcement of Fines

Finance presented an announcement of fines against the Investment Club and the Listening Center, for failure to present their budget plan and organization contract. They will be fined \$50 each.

5. Allocation of \$800 from Conference to College Democrats

Finance moved to allocate \$800 from the Conference Fund to the College Democrats. The money is to allow members of the organization to attend the Young Democrats of America conference, which includes a keynote luncheon with most or all of the Democratic presidential candidates. All of Council voted in favor of the allocation, and the motion passed.

6. CA 22-1: Strategic Planning Bill

On behalf of Exec, Academics moved to adopt Council Action 22-1: Strategic Planning Bill. 2010 moved to amend the bill, to strike the second sentence of Section 6.

Vote on 2010’s Amendment:

Abstentions: None (0).

Not in Favor: Student Life, Academics, and Operations (3).

In Favor: All else (20).

Result: Motion passed.

Council then engaged in a discussion about whether the bill adequately discusses the new committee’s long-term goals. Main moved to amend the bill, to strike Section 6, and add an additional sentence to Section 3, reading: “These recommendations shall focus on the long-term strategy of the VSA.” Council debated how best to articulate the emphasis on long-term goals in the bill. All of Council voted in favor of the amendment, and the motion passed.

There is no longer a Section 6. Sections 7 and 8 will be re-numbered accordingly. Section 3 now reads: “The SPC shall make recommendations to relevant VSA and College committees. These recommendations shall focus on the long-term strategy of the VSA.”

All of Council voted in favor of adopting CA 22-1, and the motion passed.

7. Announcement of Dean of the College Review Committee

Student Life announced the Dean of the College Review Committee. J.J. Jackson is up for review, as happens every five years on the fourth year of the Dean's tenure. The committee shall consist of two co-chairs and five members at large. The co-chair will be Jessica Gem Linden Swienckowski. The purpose of the committee is to provide a review of the Dean's performance, as well as the performance of the division. Applications for the committee will be due November 21. Exec will report on the final composition of the committee on December 9, which is the last meeting of the year.

Operations moved to declare open for appointment five at-large positions on the Dean of the College Review Committee. All of Council voted in favor, and the motion passed.

8. Certification of Ceramics

Activities moved to certify the Vassar College Ceramics Club. The representative from the club explained that there used to be a space available on campus for ceramics, but the space no longer exists, and the art department requires compensation for the use of its facilities. All of Council voted in favor of the certification, and the motion passed.

9. Certification of WordSmiths

Activities moved to certify The WordSmiths: Vassar Spoken Word. Activities also made note that the application for certification was submitted a month ago, and since then the organization has already met. Main moved to call the certification to question.

Vote to Call the Certification to Question:

Not in Favor: Cushing, TA, 2008, Joss, Student Life, Operations, Activities, Ferry, Town Students, 2010, Academics, and Strong (12).

In Favor: Jewett, Davison, Raymond, Finance, 2009, SoCo, Lathrop, Noyes, Main (9).

Result: Motion failed.

All of Council voted in favor of the certification, and the motion passed.

10. Certification of Troupe

Activities moved to certify Troupe. A representative from the organization discussed the ways in which it differs from other comedy groups, in that it focuses on teaching how to perform improvisation and sketch comedy, and will function more as a workshop organization than a performance group. Main moved to refer the certification to the Activities Committee for reconsideration of the name. After further discussion, Main withdrew its motion to refer. Only 2010 and 2008 voted not in favor of the certification, and the motion passed.

11. Appointment of Kathleen Brady-Stepien to CASA

Operations moved to appoint Kathleen Brady-Stepien to CASA. Speaking on behalf of Appointments, Jewett discussed the strength of the application. All of Council voted in favor of the appointment, and the motion passed.

12. Appointment of Sally Huang to CASA

Operations moved to appoint Sally Huang to CASA. Speaking on behalf of Appointments, 2009 discussed the strength of the application. All of Council voted in favor of the appointment, and the motion passed.

13. Amendments to Article V of the VSA Bylaws

Operations moved to amend Article V, Sections 31 and 23 of the VSA Bylaws, as presented by Operations last week. All of Council voted in favor of the amendments, and the motion passed.

14. Censure of Garrett King and Adam Greenberg

Operations moved to censure, in accordance with Article 10, Section 2 of the VSA Bylaws, Garrett King and Adam Greenberg from the Campus Investor Responsibility Committee for failure to report to VSA Council as requested by VP Operations, as set forth in Article 5, Section 4 of the VSA Bylaws. Council engaged in a discussion about the meaning and consequences entailed by an official censure.

15. Open Discussion

- 2008 announced that 196 days remain until commencement.
- 2010 announced that their Blackout party was last night, and commended ViCE for their work on the party.
- Davison announced that Harvest Ball, themed the Big Easy for a New Orleans Jazz Club, will be this week.
- Strong announced that their Mods and Rockers party was also this weekend.
- The President, in accordance with CA 22-1, formed the committee for the SPC. Ferry, Strong, and 2009 volunteered to serve on the committee.

16. Adjourn

The meeting concluded at 8:59pm.